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Aldobrandino Tanagli and Francesco Cattani: Chancery petition, c.  
1490.

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**Margaret M. Condon, Francesco Guidi-Bruscoli and Evan T. Jones (eds.), ‘Aldobrandino Tanagli and Francesco Cattani: Chancery petition, c. 1490’ (University of Bristol, PURE, 2013)<sup>1</sup>**

The document that follows concerns a commercial dispute between a London retailer and two Italian merchants: Aldobrandino Tanagli and Francesco Cattani. The petition was presented in the Court of Chancery by the two Italians, acting on this occasion as plaintiffs in the course of a more prolonged dispute. The manuscript is reproduced in part because it identifies the location of the London house of the Bardi – a Florentine banking firm headed by Agnolo di Bernardo de’ Bardi. The Bardi and their London establishment have been the subject of a recent article by Francesco Guidi-Bruscoli, which investigated the firm’s 1496 funding of the Venetian explorer ‘Giovanni Chabotte’ (John Cabot).<sup>2</sup> In 1497, the year after Cabot received his funding from the Bardi, the Venetian and his Bristol companions reached North America, claimed the land in the name of the king and spent a month exploring the coast. This event forms the basis for English claims to the European ‘discovery’ of North America.

An examination and discussion of the petition, of the legal dispute it described, and of the petitioners themselves, casts additional light on the commercial world in which John Cabot’s Italian supporters and associates operated in England. The following introduction will thus serve both to explain the circumstances of the dispute and to detail some of the new findings that have arisen from the attempt to understand the document and its significance. The analysis will proceed first by considering the location of the Bardi’s house. It will then discuss the petition itself, before turning to an examination of the two plaintiffs.

### *The House*

The Chancery petition states that the Bardi’s house was in ‘Seynt Clementes lane in London’, this being a narrow street, c. 140 metres long, in the eastern part of the City. The lane originally connected Lombard Street and Candlewick Street (Cannon Street) at the junction with (Great) Eastcheap (Fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> This area was the heart of London’s financial district and of its ex-patriate

<sup>1</sup> The National Archives: Public Record Office, UK [TNA: PRO], C1/110/36. The following conventions were employed when transcribing the document: the line spacing, spelling, and capitalization (other than proper names) follow the manuscript; reconstructions of suspensions are in italics; ‘u’ and ‘v’ have been rendered according to the document rather than to modern usage. Instances in which it is not clear whether an abbreviation is intended, or where the form taken by the extension is unclear, have been indicated by an apostrophe. The manuscript is unpunctuated, and that convention is followed in the transcript. Running numbers in the left hand margin are an editorial intervention indicating the start of a new line in the manuscript. This transcription was undertaken as part of the ‘Cabot Project’ (University of Bristol, 2009-) in the phase funded by Gretchen Bauta, a private Canadian benefactor. We would like to thank Dr Jeff Reed and Susan Snelgrove for commenting on an earlier draft of this paper, and Isobel Watson for her assistance with City parish boundaries.

<sup>2</sup> F. Guidi-Bruscoli, ‘John Cabot and his Italian Financiers’, *Historical Research*, 85, no. 229 (August 2012), pp. 372-93. Cabot, sometimes described as a Genoese, or ‘from Gaeta’, was naturalised as a Venetian citizen c. 1472-3: J. A. Williamson, *The Cabot Voyages and Bristol Discovery under Henry VII* (Hakluyt Society, Second Series, CXX, 1962), pp. 33, 190-1. For a study of Cabot’s ‘Venetian-ness’, Edoardo Giuffrida, ‘New documents on Giovanni Caboto’, in Rosella Mamoli Zorzi, ed., *Attraversare gli Oceani: Da Giovanni Caboto al Canada multiculturale* (Venice, 1999), pp. 61-71.

<sup>3</sup> Since 1831 St Clement’s Lane has been truncated below St Clement’s Church by King William Street: B. Weinreb and C. Hibbert (eds.), *The London Encyclopaedia* (London, 1983), pp. 118, 180-1. Around this time the street also became known simply as ‘Clements Lane’ – possibly to avoid confusion with St Clements Lane in Holborn. The whole area, including the church of St Clement Eastcheap, had, of course, been extensively rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1666. Candlewick Street had become known as Cannon Street by at least the eighteenth century; the old name is preserved in the title of one of the twenty-five wards of the city, Candlewick Ward. Richard Horwood’s influential map of 1792-9 designates Great Eastcheap as the short section between Clements Lane and Gracechurch

Italian community. The house was also very close to the home of Robert Thirkill, an English merchant whose brother, Lancelot, was involved in John Cabot's expeditions.<sup>4</sup> That the firm was located 'off Lombard Street' was claimed by Dr Alwyn Ruddock in a book proposal she submitted to the University of Exeter Press in 1992.<sup>5</sup> Although Ruddock did not specify her source, and had all her research notes destroyed after her death, it seems likely that her information came from the document transcribed below.

Guidi-Bruscoli's article considered the location of the Bardi's house using the evidence then at his disposal. This came from the firm's accounts and the 1495 will of the Bardi's landlord, William Brette.<sup>6</sup> Brette, who had no sons, left his wife the remaining terms of his leases of property in three adjoining City parishes: St Edmund the King, which straddles Lombard Street, and St Clement and St Benet Gracechurch, which lie just south of it.<sup>7</sup> Using the Chancery petition evidence, it is now possible to narrow down the range of parishes and to identify the street on which the Bardi's house lay. Given that we now know that their house was on St Clement's Lane, and that Elizabeth, Brette's widow, continued as the Bardi's landlord, it seems almost certain that the property was among those leased by Brette from William Chicheley.<sup>8</sup> Guidi-Bruscoli has shown the Bardi's house to have been a substantial property of eighteen rooms, commanding a high rental value of £8 p.a.<sup>9</sup> The house itself could have been sited either in the parish of St Edmund or in St Clement Eastcheap, since the upper third of St Clement's Lane lay within the larger parish of St Edmund. Either parish would thus accord with the provisions of Brette's will.<sup>10</sup> A further indication of the likely location of the building has been found in a 1470 memoranda roll, which states that Giovanni di Agnolo di Zanobi de' Bardi,

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Street: the medieval Eastcheap was not so subdivided: John Northoock, *A New History of London: including Westminster and Southwark* (London, 1773), pp. 576-9 [online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=46756>]; TNA: PRO, WO78/5780.

<sup>4</sup> Robert's will indicates that he was to be buried in his parish church, St Nicholas Acon, located c. 50 metres from St Clement's Church: TNA: PRO, PROB 11/12, fos 26v-27. Between 1495 and 1498 he seems to have acted as Lancelot's deputy in exercising the office of ulnager of London: *Cal. Fine Rolls 1485-1509*, no 515; E159/273, Attornies Easter 12 Hen VII, dorset; E 159/274, Attornies Mich 13 Hen VII; E 159/273, Communia Recorda, Easter 12 Hen VII, rot. 2-2d. In 1498 Lancelot Thirkill received a loan from the king to facilitate his participation in the expedition of that year: Williamson, *Cabot Voyages*, pp. 214-15. Whether Lancelot's involvement with Cabot predates this is currently unknown.

<sup>5</sup> E. T. Jones, 'Alwyn Ruddock: "John Cabot and the Discovery of America"', *Historical Research*, 81, no. 212 (May 2008), pp. 235-6.

<sup>6</sup> The Bardi first paid rent to Brette from 29 September 1493. But since theirs was a sub-lease, and they were paying exactly the same rent to Richard Singleton from at least March 1492, it seems probable that the Bardi's occupation of the house was continuous throughout the period: Archivio Guiccardini, Florence [AGF], Bardi 11, fos. 23, 45; Bardi 12, fo. 12; Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', p. 383. The *Libro Giallo* (yellow) (1488-90), and *Nero* (black) (1490-92) that preceded the *Libro Rosso* (red) (Bardi 11), and covered the period of the petition, were returned to Florence after the closure of the London branch and were extant in 1512, but no longer survive: AGF, Bardi 30, fo. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', p. 383.

<sup>8</sup> Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', p. 383; TNA: PRO, PROB11/10, fo. 152r. Brette himself was resident in the parish of St Mary Abchurch.

<sup>9</sup> Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', pp. 383-4. By way of comparison Joan, the widow of Sir George Darrell, in 1491 made a twenty-year lease of a property in St Clements Lane that included 'chambers, shops, cellars and solars' for £4 4s p.a.: TNA: PRO, C146/1707; cf. C146/1058.

<sup>10</sup> In 1638 the incumbent of St Edmunds listed sixteen properties in St Clements Lane, with rental values between £12 and £80; the returns for St Clements refer to the whole parish, rather than being broken down by street, and give moderated rental values (a quarter to a third less than actual values) between £6 and £80, with a significant number in the mid range of £25-£45: T. C. Dale, *The Inhabitants of London in 1638* (London, 1931), pp. 53-4, 46.

from whom his nephew Agnolo de' Bardi had inherited the bank, resided in a house in the parish of St Clement.<sup>11</sup> Giovanni appears to have been based in London from the mid-1450s to the 1470s, only returning permanently to Florence in c. 1483.<sup>12</sup> Following his death in 1488, the London firm passed to his heirs, led by his nephew, Agnolo, who remained based in Florence.<sup>13</sup> Since the London branch continued to operate throughout this period, it seems likely that the house on St Clement's Lane was the same as the one 'in the parish of St Clement' where Giovanni had formerly resided. This would place the house in the southern part of the lane.

### *The Dispute*

The Chancery petition submitted by Tanagli and Cattani was a response to a successful action that had been brought against them in the Court of Husting by Harry Cok, a London grocer. Cok had claimed trespass in the London court on the grounds that the two Italians had sold to a third party cloth that he had contracted to buy at an agreed price. In effect, the Italians had thus sold something that already belonged to Cok, albeit he had yet to make payment. The implication was presumably that the merchants reneged on the agreement because they had received a better offer elsewhere.

Cok's prosecution was successful, Tanagli and Cattani being condemned by jury verdict. The Italians, however, asserted in their chancery petition that the canvas was theirs, that Cok had initially requested to buy it, but he had then tried to secure a discount by buying the cloth after the 'cord' (probably 48 inches) rather than the English ell of 45 inches.<sup>14</sup> In other words, having agreed to buy the canvas at so much per ell, Cok tried to get Tanagli and Cattani to accept the same sum for a longer measure. If he had been successful, the grocer would have secured a 6.25 percent discount. Beyond this, the Italians claimed that Cok sought to delay payment, which would have given them further grounds for backing out of the deal. Tanagli and Cattani said that they declined the sale at this point, and sold the canvas elsewhere.

Having lost the case at the Court of Husting, the two merchants petitioned Chancery, alleging an 'untrue' verdict by the London jurors. The petition requested that the sheriffs of London be ordered to return the lower court's record of the case into Chancery, since the two plaintiffs had no avenue of redress at common law. Authorisation for the issue of a writ of *certiorari* out of Chancery was basically an order of course, and was duly granted. Unfortunately, the sheriffs' return has not survived and, as is the case with the majority of extant petitions of this date, no other proceedings survive.<sup>15</sup> The outcome of the case is thus unknown.

<sup>11</sup> TNA: PRO, E159/247, Recorda Trin. 10 Edw. IV, rot. 7 d : image at [http://aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT2/E4/E159no247/bE159no247dorses/IMG\\_0400.htm](http://aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT2/E4/E159no247/bE159no247dorses/IMG_0400.htm)

<sup>12</sup> Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', pp. 380-1; A. C. Blume, 'Giovanni de' Bardi and Sandro Botticelli in Santo Spirito', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, xxxvii (1995), pp. 170-2.

<sup>13</sup> Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', p. 381. An inventory of 1512 lists ledgers of the London branch as then still extant from 1481, while also mentioning also a 'quaderno ... proprio' (personal book) of Giovanni de' Bardi, begun in 1468: AGF, Bardi 30, fo. 6.

<sup>14</sup> The 'cord' is usually figured as a volumetric measure, typically associated with timber – a cord of wood being 4 foot wide, 4 foot high and 8 foot long. The measurement of this was determined with a cord or string: R. E. Zupko, *A Dictionary of English Weights and Measures: from Anglo-Saxon Times to the Nineteenth Century* (Wisconsin, 1968). By implication, the measuring cord used for this must have been 48 inches (i.e. 4 foot) long.

<sup>15</sup> The Husting Book(s) (Originals in the London Metropolitan Archives) have also not survived for much of Henry VII's reign. Had the sheriffs' return survived, it would have given an indication of the make-up of the jury panel – which should have included both denizen and Italian jurors.

*The Petitioners*

The Italian merchants who presented the petition are themselves interesting, and both have Bardi connections running deeper than a casual use of the firm's house. The first named, the Florentine Aldobrandino Tanagli, has been shown by Guidi-Bruscoli to be the man who authorised the Bardi's loan to John Cabot.<sup>16</sup> The other, Francesco Cattani, is more elusive; but there are traces of his activities in England around the time of the dispute.

The London branch of the Bardi was autonomous in its day-to-day operations, but was ultimately answerable to Agnolo di Bernardo de' Bardi in Florence. The firm's local management were employees, drawn both from within the family group and from others of the Italian community. This was common practice.<sup>17</sup> Tanagli was associated with the Bardi's trading activities from at least 1489.<sup>18</sup> He was manager of the branch by or before March 1492, at which date the first of the firm's surviving ledgers commences.<sup>19</sup> He seems to have been replaced as manager of the London firm by Migiotto de' Bardi before 1500, and perhaps left the firm's direct employ at that point.<sup>20</sup> However Tanagli continued to enjoy good relations with one of the firm's more important clients, Adriano Castellesi, the papal collector and Henry VII's proctor at the Roman Curia. At the Vatican, Castellesi acted in effect, if not in title, as Cardinal protector on behalf of the king.<sup>21</sup> Tanagli's close relationship with Castellesi is illustrated in their surviving correspondence, as well as by the way that, in 1502, Tanagli agreed to be bound with the absent Castellesi in the large sum of 500 marks (£333 6s. 8d).<sup>22</sup> This was the king's price for livery to Castellesi of the temporalities of the diocese of Hereford, the Italian having been made Bishop of Hereford on 14 February 1502.<sup>23</sup>

During Tanagli's time as manager of the Bardi's bank, he had facilitated the transfer to Rome of monies collected for the papal tax known as 'Peter's Pence'. This was done using banking services provided for Fra Giovanni Antonio de Carbonariis, an Augustinian friar who served as Castellesi's deputy in England from 1494-98.<sup>24</sup> Carbonariis sailed with Cabot in 1498 and was thought by Dr Alwyn Ruddock to be both the explorer's most important patron in

<sup>16</sup> Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', p. 376.

<sup>17</sup> Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', pp. 380-5; M. E. Bratchel, 'Italian merchant organization and business relationships in early Tudor London', *Journal European Economic History*, 7, no. 1 (Spring 1978), pp. 5-32.

<sup>18</sup> TNA: PRO, E122/143/1, export of wool from Southampton by Tanagli and Lodovico de' Bardi, 24 November 1489 and 8 March, 15 June 1490. Their shipments totalled more than 228 sacks.

<sup>19</sup> Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', pp. 381-2.

<sup>20</sup> Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', pp. 382-3.

<sup>21</sup> For Castellesi, T. F. Mayer, 'Adriano Castellesi', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; W. E. Wilkie, *The Cardinal Protectors of England: Rome and the Tudors before the Reformation* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 24-63, 74-75.

<sup>22</sup> Archivio di Stato, Florence (ASF), Carte Stroziane, Prima Serie, 241, fos 32-33: Castellesi to Tanagli, 12 November 1505; TNA:PRO, E101/415/3, fo. 209v. Castellesi was raised to the cardinalate on 31 May 1503. He was translated to Bath and Wells on 4 August 1504.

<sup>23</sup> It is probable that this sum included both a composition for Castellesi's retention of rents and other secular revenues accruing during the vacancy prior to his appointment, and a fine or payment for the release of the lands from the hands of the Crown, the king being the feudal overlord for the temporalities of the see. By the close of the reign such payments were being pushed to extremes: C. J. Harrison, 'The Petition of Edmund Dudley', *English Historical Review*, 87, no. 242 (1972), pp. 82-99.

<sup>24</sup> Bills of exchange drawn on the Bardi's extensive merchant network meant that money deposited with them in England could be paid in Rome in the local currency without needing to transfer actual specie – which was, in any case, prohibited under English statutes. For a brief explanation of the process, Raymond de Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank 1397-1494* (New York edn, 1966), pp. 109-115.

England and the later founder of a religious colony in Newfoundland.<sup>25</sup> He is believed not to have returned from America.

By 1502 Castellesi had recruited Polydore Vergil, the noted humanist scholar, as his deputy in England. In providing bills of exchange for Vergil, Tanagli continued to facilitate the payments of papal dues back to Rome.<sup>26</sup> Vergil himself is of interest to discovery historians for having been one of the few contemporary chroniclers to comment on the voyages of John Cabot, being, in particular, the only person to make a suggestion about the explorer's presumed death.<sup>27</sup>

Tanagli's personal trade never achieved the levels of great merchants such as Lorenzo Buonvisi and Lodovico della Fava. Moreover, while Italians are typically associated with commerce in high value luxury cloths, Tanagli dealt also in low value bulk goods.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless both he, and his brother, Manno, were occasional suppliers of fine cloth to the king.<sup>29</sup> With the Lucchese merchant, Giovanni Paolo Gigli, Tanagli obtained the farm of the exchange in England 'towards foreign parts' and of the exchange in Calais for six years from Michaelmas 1498.<sup>30</sup> It seems possible that the formation of this partnership, combined with the promotion of Migiotto de' Bardi within the firm's London banking house, marked the end of Tanagli's employment with the Bardi.

Tanagli's career pattern, his high standing within the ex-patriate Florentine community, and the periodic mentions made of him in the accounts of the king's treasurer of the chamber, indicate that the merchant is likely to have been known to the king and that he would occasionally have frequented the court. This would have made him a useful patron for John Cabot as the Venetian searched for investment funds and support for his proposed voyage of exploration.

<sup>25</sup> Jones, 'Alwyn Ruddock', pp. 232-4, 242-4, 246-50. For evidence that Carbonariis interceded on the explorer's behalf in September 1497 to secure him a reward from the king, see: E. T. Jones, 'Bristol, Cabot and the New Found Land, 1496-1500' in Pope, P. E. & Lewis-Simpson, S. (eds.), *Exploring Atlantic Transitions: Archaeologies of Permanence and Transience in New Found Lands* (Society of Post Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series, Vol. 7), in press.

<sup>26</sup> I. S. Leadam, 'Polydore Vergil in the English Law Courts', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, New Series, 19 (1905), pp. 279-94; Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', pp. 388-9.

<sup>27</sup> Williamson, *Cabot Voyages*, pp. 224-5.

<sup>28</sup> Examples of Tanagli's trade are given in Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', pp. 381-2. For a new study of the trade in luxury cloth in relation to supplies to the King's Wardrobe, M. Hayward, *The Great Wardrobe Accounts of Henry VII and Henry VIII* (London Record Society, 2012).

<sup>29</sup> Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', p. 382; TNA: PRO, E404/83, 27 February 1500 (Manno).

<sup>30</sup> *Cal. Fine Rolls, 1485-1509*, p. 283. Many forms of royal revenue, as well as other crown prerogatives, were 'farmed' at this time, whereby an individual, consortium or corporation paid a fixed rent to the crown in return for the right to collect and retain the benefits of the farm. The export of bullion, and the import of foreign coin, was repeatedly forbidden throughout the middle ages. In this context, the 'exchange' was a place where gold or silver, such as foreign specie, could be exchanged for English coin (or, in Calais, the 'mark' of Calais), with the crown charging a fee or duty for doing this. A second form of exchange involved the transfer of money across national boundaries, for example, to the Knights of Rhodes or to the Roman Curia. Such transfers, often effected by bills of exchange, required a license from the Crown, for which a fee was again payable. In the event Gigli and Tanagli retained their farm of the Calais exchange, and of the operation of the licensing system, for the full term. However, from 1503 they were forced to pay a higher rate, after a new grant to the Genoese merchant Giovanni Antonio Boero threatened their dispossession. TNA: PRO, E159/281, Recorda 18 Hen. VII Easter, rots. 1d, 2d: digital image at [http://aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT5/H7/E159no281/bE159no281dorses/IMG\\_0583.htm](http://aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT5/H7/E159no281/bE159no281dorses/IMG_0583.htm), contd. IMG\_0585, 0586; *Cal. Patent. Rolls 1494-1509*, pp. 311-2. Gigli was resident in Broad Street, in the parish of St Bartholomew the Less: one of many indications that the Italian mercantile community had, by the late fifteenth century, spread well beyond the traditional centre of their trade in Lombard street: TNA: PRO, E114/51.

The second petitioner, Francesco Cattani, is known to have been a Bardi client. Cattani is described in the Bardi accounts as a Milanese, with the earlier of the two surviving ledgers, the *Libro Rosso*, identifying him as an employee ('giovane') of the Florentine firm of Medici-Tornabuoni of Lyons.<sup>31</sup> That Cattani was described as a Florentine in the Chancery petition, rather than a Milanese, is probably no more than scribal shorthand, possibly on account of his Florentine associations.<sup>32</sup> While the extent of Cattani's business dealings with Tanagli is unknown, in the context of the petition, the pattern of Cattani's trade becomes important. Whereas Tanagli, and the Bardi, seem primarily to have shipped through London and Southampton, Cattani's imports came through Sandwich and Dover. His shipments were varied, including Gascon wine, saffron, furs, luxury cloths, and braids. They also included coarse cloth.<sup>33</sup> On 9 December 1489, in addition to furs, cambric, sheets and saffron, Cattani imported 350 ells of canvas, valued at £3 10s, and 60 ells of Normandy linen, valued at 30s. In the summer immediately preceding, however, he had imported (at a date between June and August 1489) 3,400 ells of Normandy linen cloth, as well as brown cloth, saffron and other small goods.<sup>34</sup> If this linen cloth was actually a form of canvas, then the cloth at the heart of the dispute may well have been a part of this consignment.

The Chancery petition is thus short but significant. It identifies the location of the Bardi's house, in the process confirming another of the unpublished claims of Dr Ruddock. The firm was located in the geographical heart of the Italian merchant community and close to others who are known to have been involved with Cabot. As the foregoing investigation has made clear, this was a world of close commercial, physical and personal relationships; with some of those who were connected to the dispute having multiple links to men who engaged with, or commented on, the explorer's voyages. In itself, the tightness of this community helps to explain how and why information about Cabot's voyages circulated so readily among the London-based Italians – as is apparent from the letters written home by the merchant Lorenzo Pasqualigo of Venice and by the Milanese envoy Raimondo de Raimondi de Soncino. The inter-related nature of this mercantile community also suggests that, once Cabot had secured his first supporters among the London-based Italians, he is likely to have been able to exploit the links within the community to acquire funding and support from others. Such support would have been vital to Cabot as he developed the plans that enabled him and his Bristol companions to venture across the Atlantic.

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<sup>31</sup> AGF, Bardi 11 (*Libro Rosso*), fos 57, 89, 147, 163, 276, 305; the *Libro Giallo*, Bardi 12, fos. 55, 295 describes him only as 'Milanese'. A Francesco 'Catteyn' was patron of the carrack that entered the port of London 18 August 1491, carrying goods valued at over £3,500 for various Genoese and Venetian merchants, TNA:PRO, E122/78/9 mm. 6-6d. English documents are reductive in their treatment of Italian names, so that this Francesco is more likely to be different, and to be a member of the prominent Genoese family, the Cattanei, for whom see A. A. Ruddock, *Italian Merchants and Shipping in Southampton 1270-1600* (Southampton, 1951), pp. 110-1, 124-5, 216; a Genoese Francesco Cattanei, with interests in England, was dead before 1508: TNA: PRO, C237/58, File 6, no. 24.

<sup>32</sup> For a general discussion of subsidiary and temporary partnerships between Italian merchants in England, Bratchel, 'Italian merchant organisation', pp. 22-8.

<sup>33</sup> On 13 January 1487 he imported 11 tuns of wine spread across two ships: TNA: PRO, E122/129/3, particulars of account, Sandwich, Michaelmas 2-3 Henry VII. In 1489-90 he made several shipments. That of 15 November included both fine satin and coarse cloth, as well as furs; his February shipment, through Dover, consisted of silks and finely worked braids or belts: E122/129/5, fos. 1v, 9. For December 1489, see above and fo. 2v.

<sup>34</sup> TNA: PRO, E122/129/4, fo. 13. The incoming customer, succeeding on 4 June, part way through the accounting period, did not observe strict chronological order in his entries of imports into Sandwich June to August 1489; and the account itself is badly damaged.

*The Petition*<sup>35</sup>

To the moost reuerent fader in god John Archbisshop'  
of Caunterbury and Chaunceller of England<sup>36</sup>

- 1 In full humbly wise besechyn your good and *gracious* lordship' your contynuell Oratours  
Altobrand Tanagli<sup>37</sup> and ffraunceis Cattani merchauntes of fflorence that Where as oon Herry  
Cok of london
- 2 Grocer the xxij day of August in the fifte yere of the reign of oure soueraign lord the kyng<sup>38</sup> came  
into the hous of oon' Angell de Bardes<sup>39</sup> in Seynt Clementes lane in london aforseid and there  
and then he
- 3 desired to bye CCCC elles<sup>40</sup> of Normandie Camuas<sup>41</sup> of your seid Oratours and theruppon they  
aggreed uppon a *certayn* price<sup>42</sup> for the which price the seid Herry desired of your seid Oratours  
respitte
- 4 unto the next day folwyng at viij at klok in the mornynge at which tyme by theym [s]o appoynted  
the seid Herry came nott and afterward your seid Oratours demaunded the seid Herry whither
- 5 he wold haue the seid Camuas and he answerd theym that if they wold suffer hym to haue the  
said Camuas by measure of the coord<sup>43</sup> and not by the elle he wold haue it wherunto your
- 6 seid Oratours wold notte agree and so departed and also the seid Herry desired longer respitte  
and that your seid Oratours denyed And after ymmediat your seid suppliauntes sold the seid
- 7 Camuas to other marchauntes after which sale the seid Herry commensed an accion of trespas  
uppon his case<sup>44</sup> in london before the Shireffes<sup>45</sup> there ayenst your seid suppliauntes and theym  
hath

<sup>35</sup> For an image of the original document, [http://aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT4/ChP/C1no110/IMG\\_0064.htm](http://aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT4/ChP/C1no110/IMG_0064.htm); dorse at IMG\_0065.

<sup>36</sup> John Morton, Chancellor 6 March 1486 (*Cal. Close Rolls 1485-1500*, no. 67) to 15 September 1500; archbishop of Canterbury, provided 6 October 1486; created cardinal 26 September 1493.

<sup>37</sup> Aldobrandino Tanagli, manager of the London Branch of the Bardi from at least 1492 to c. 1498: F. Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', *Historical Research*, 85, no. 229 (August 2012), pp. 381-2.

<sup>38</sup> i.e. 22 August 1489.

<sup>39</sup> Agnolo di Bernardo de' Bardi (1461-1511), the head of the Florentine firm known in England as the Heirs of Giovanni de' Bardi and Partners: Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', pp. 374, 379-81.

<sup>40</sup> The English ell, a measure of length, was forty-five inches, and would have been intended here. The Flemish ell was shorter, at twenty-seven inches, or three quarters of a yard. The 400 ells cited in this petition would thus have been equivalent to 500 yards.

<sup>41</sup> Normandy canvas. Canvas was a coarse cloth woven from flax or hemp; the 'Normandy' of the description indicates the place of manufacture.

<sup>42</sup> 'certayn price' – i.e. an agreed fixed price, in this case based on so much per ell.

<sup>43</sup> See footnote 14, which suggests a unit measure of forty-eight inches for a cord: that is, a measure three inches longer than an ell.



8        empled to an issue howe that the seid Herry delyuered unto the custodie and kepyng of the seid  
suppliauntes the seid Camuas to his owne and *propre* use the yere and day abouseid And  
9        the seid Herry theruppon causid a Jurie to be empanellid the which Jurie *without* drede of god or  
shame of the world haue passid ayenst your seid suppliauntes *contrary* to all right and good  
10        conscience In which case your seid Oratours haue no remedie *without* the *gracious* aide of your  
seid grace to theym beshewed in this behalf Therfor that it wold please your seid lordship the  
11        *premyssez* considred to graunt a *cerciorari* direct to the seid Shirefs *commaundyng* theym by the  
same to *certifie* the seid cause before your seid lordship' their to be adiuged as right and  
conscience  
12        requireth this at the reuerence of god and in the wey of charitie

*Endorsed*

r' Crastino *Animarum proximo futuro*<sup>46</sup>

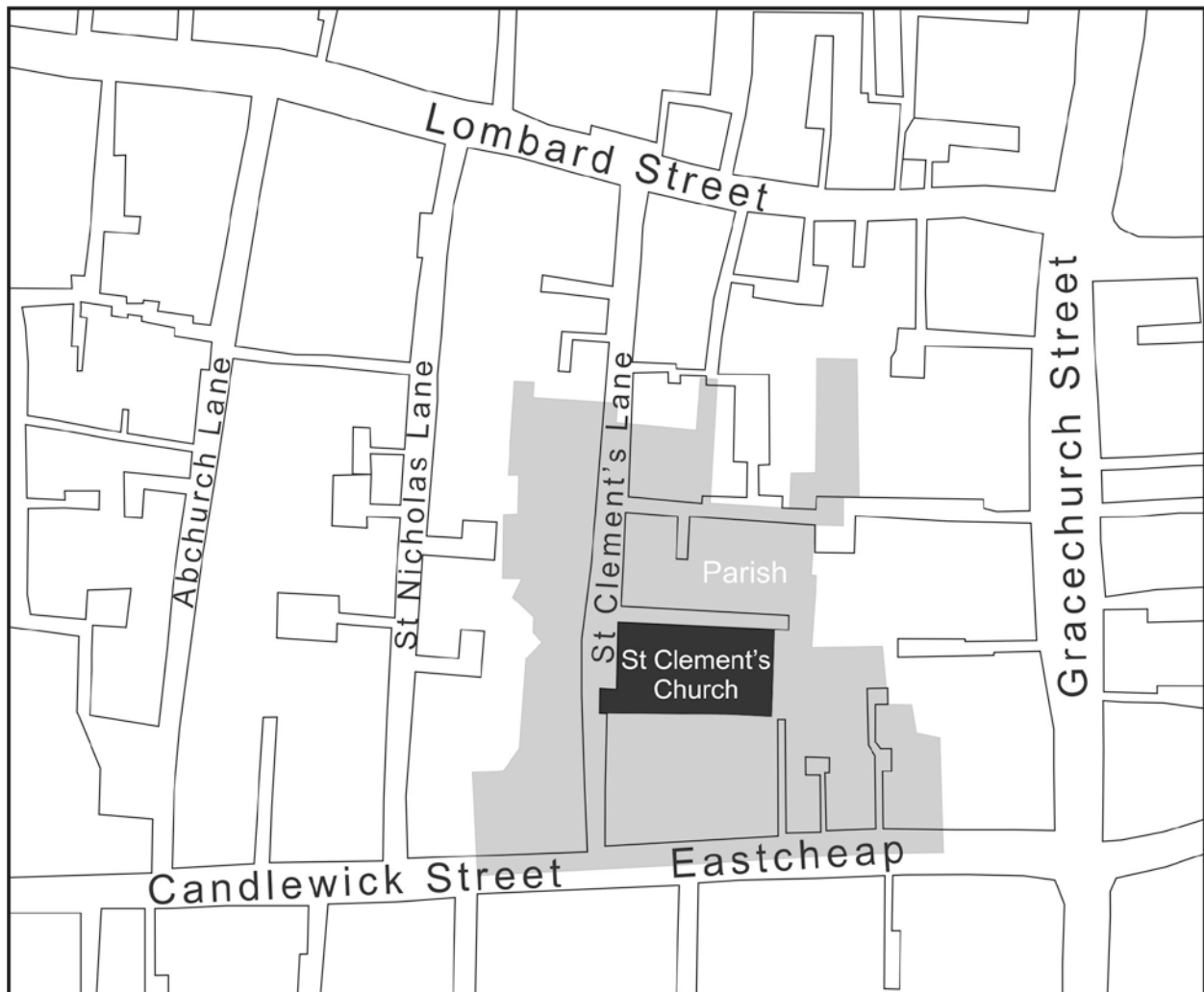
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<sup>44</sup> An action for a wrong or injury not accompanied by force. For a discussion of the origins of the action, E. J. Dix, 'The Origins of the Action of Trespass on the Case', *The Yale Law Journal*, vol. 46 no. 7 (May, 1937), pp. 1142-1176.

<sup>45</sup> i.e. the London Court of Husting.

<sup>46</sup> The endorsement indicates that the writ was duly issued, returnable on the Morrow of All Souls, that is, 3 November. Since writs into London were commonly given a very short day, the return day implies that the petition had been presented in Michaelmas term.

Fig. 1: Map of St Clement's Lane and surrounding area.<sup>47</sup>



<sup>47</sup> Based on a large-scale map of London, the first edition of which was published in thirty-two sheets (at a scale of 26 inches to the mile) by Richard Horwood 1792-9 TNA: PRO, WO78/5780: *Plan of London and Westminster, the Borough of Southwark and Parts adjoining Shewing every House. By R. Horwood*. The bounds of the parish of St Clement is the area shown in grey on the map, and is based on *The City of London, showing Parish Boundaries prior to the Union of Parishes Act, 1907, on the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey Map, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1876*, London Topographical Society, 92 (1959).